CRIME

NO. 1

CRIME SUSPENSTORIES

10¢

FEATURING A NEW TREND IN MAGAZINES...

STARTLING TALES OF TENSION!

milehighcomics.com ™

FIRST SUSPENSFUL ISSUE!

NO. 1
NOV

CRIME SUSPENSTORIES

1.50
1.90
CANADA

FEATURING A NEW TREND IN MAGAZINES...
STARTLING TALES OF TENSION!

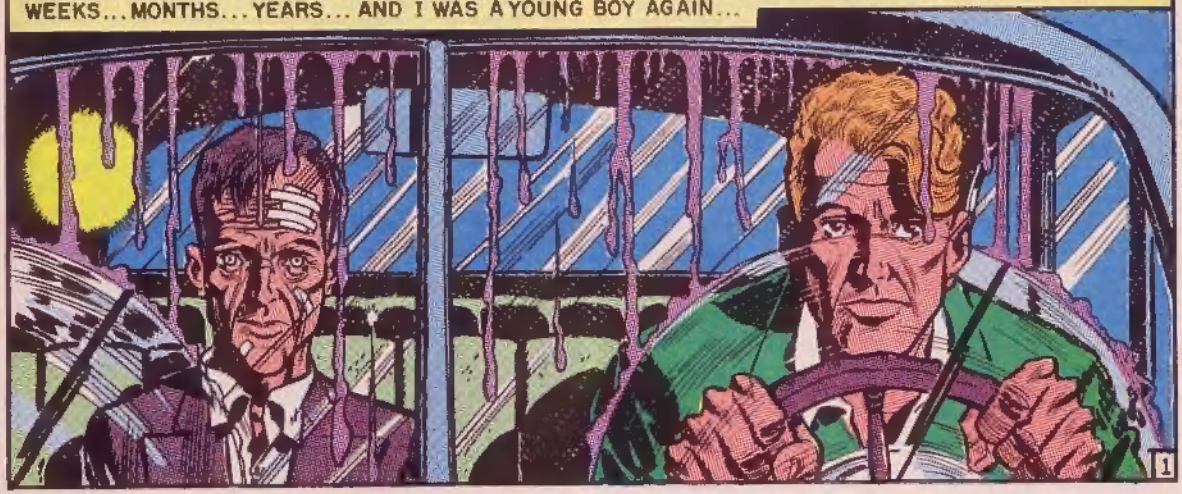
THIS IS THE DOLL YOU'RE PAYING ME TO KILL? WHY *THIS*... THIS IS A PICTURE OF *YOU!*

JOHNNY CRAIG

MURDER MAY BOOMERANG

JOHNNY CRAIG

WE HAD BEEN DRIVING FOR HOURS. THE STEADY HUM OF THE MOTOR AND THE SWISH-SWISHING OF THE WINDSHIELD WIPERS HAD DEADENED MY BRAIN UNTIL I DROVE WITHOUT THINKING. ON AND ON... NEVER STOPPING, NEVER WANTING TO STOP, *AFRAID* TO STOP. AND AS OUR CAR TRAVELED THE ENDLESS MILES OF HIGHWAY, MY MIND DRIFTED BACK THROUGH TIME... THROUGH THE PAST WEEKS... MONTHS... YEARS... AND I WAS A YOUNG BOY AGAIN...



AFTER MY MOTHER HAD PASSED AWAY, MY FATHER AND I HAD BECOME CLOSER TO EACH OTHER THAN EVER. ALL THE LOVE WE SHARED FOR MOM WAS NOW GIVEN TO ONE ANOTHER...

GEE, DAD... IT SURE IS DIFFERENT AROUND THE HOUSE NOW THAT... MOM'S NOT HERE...

I KNOW, SON! BUT WE HAVE TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT. YOUR MOTHER WOULD WANT US BOTH TO BE STRONG.

DAD DIDN'T HAVE A WELL-PAYING JOB AND HE HAD TO WORK HARD. I WAS GOING TO GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND I REMEMBER HOW HE WOULD COME HOME AT NIGHT...SO EXHAUSTED!

HERE, DAD, SIT DOWN! I FIXED DINNER FOR YOU...

THANKS, LAD! YOU'RE A GOOD BOY... A GOOD BOY!

OH, WE HAD OUR GOOD TIMES. WE WENT TO THE CIRCUS AND WE SAW A COUPLE OF BALL GAMES... EVEN WHEN WE REALLY COULDN'T AFFORD IT...

HEY, DAD, LOOK! *A HOMER!*

HOW *ABOUT* THAT?

...OF COURSE, WE HAD TROUBLES TOO! I ALWAYS TRIED TO HELP...

QUIT SCHOOL AND GO TO WORK? NO, SON... WE DON'T NEED THE MONEY *THAT* BADLY. YOU GO TO SCHOOL... THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT! AND I WANT YOU TO PROMISE NEVER TO THINK ABOUT *QUITTING* SCHOOL AGAIN!

O.K., DAD... IF YOU SAY SO! I... I JUST DON'T LIKE TO SEE YOU WORKING SO HARD...

WHEN I GRADUATED FROM HIGH-SCHOOL, I WANTED TO LOOK FOR A JOB! BUT...

MY BOY, YOU HAVE TO STUDY *HARD* TO BE A CHEMICAL ENGINEER! A COLLEGE EDUCATION IS A *MUST!* AND DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT ME... I'LL BE ALL RIGHT!

AND SO I WENT TO COLLEGE. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME DAD AND I HAD BEEN SEPARATED, AND I MISSED HIM AND WORRIED ABOUT HIM SOMETHING FIERCE! THEN...

DEAR DAD,
WELL, MY COLLEGE DAYS ARE OVER. I PASSED MY EXAMS WITH HONORS AND HAVE BEEN OFFERED A JOB WITH THE BLAZER CHEMICAL CO. IT ISN'T MUCH, BUT IT'S A START, WITH A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR ADVANCEMENT. AT LEAST, I'LL BE EARNING SOME MONEY, AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE IT A LOT EASIER NOW.
SEE YOU NEXT WEEK.
LOVINGLY,
YOUR SON.

DAD MET ME AT THE TRAIN. I WAS SHOCKED TO SEE HOW ILL HE WAS...GAUNT... AND OH, SO TIRED!

DAD, DAD! GEE, IT'S SWELL TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

MY BOY! MY BOY! (SOB!) I'M... I'M SO *PROUD* OF YOU!

DAD DIDN'T HAVE TO WORK SO HARD NOW THAT I HAD A JOB. AND THEN ABOUT SIX MONTHS LATER...

WHA...WHAT? SON! WHAT'S THE MATTER!

DAD! DAD! IT'S HAPPENED! I MADE IT! I FINALLY MADE IT! *I'VE BEEN PROMOTED!*

WHY SON, THAT'S *WONDERFUL!*

DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS *MEANS*, DAD? I'LL BE EARNING *PLENTY* OF MONEY NOW! YOU CAN STOP WORKING!

STOP? STOP WORKING? BUT, SON...

NOW DON'T ARGUE, DAD! YOU'VE WORKED LONG ENOUGH! YOU NEED REST! I'M GOING TO TAKE CARE OF YOU, DAD! I'M GOING TO TAKE CARE OF YOU!

OH, SON! I'M...SO PROUD OF YOU... SO HAPPY!

DAD! MY DAD...

I HAD BEEN GIVEN A VACATION WITH MY HUGE INCREASE IN PAY, SO WE RENTED A HUNTING LODGE IN THE MOUNTAINS. THIS WAS DAD'S FIRST VACATION IN YEARS, AND HE WAS LIKE A GREAT BIG KID...

THIS FRESH AIR IS GOOD FOR YOU, DAD! YOU LOOK BETTER ALREADY!

FEEL BETTER, TOO, SON! I'M SO HAPPY I COULD CRY!

YES, DAD WAS FEELING BETTER! AS THE DAYS WENT BY, COLOR RETURNED TO HIS CHEEKS, LIFE TO HIS EYES. HE GAINED WEIGHT AND I FELT WONDERFUL TO SEE HIM SO HAPPY.

SAY, SON...LOOK OVER THERE! I NEVER NOTICED THAT BEFORE!

OH, THAT'S STATE PENITENTIARY! GRIM-LOOKING ISN'T IT?

BR-R-R! WHEN I THINK OF ALL THE CRIMINALS THAT ARE COOPED UP IN THAT PLACE, IT GIVES ME THE SHIVERS!

C'MON, DAD! LET'S HEAD BACK TO THE LODGE! IT'S GETTING LATE!

YES, DAD AND I REALLY HAD OURSELVES A TIME! THERE WASN'T ANYTHING WE DIDN'T DO!

ONE DAY I HAD TO DRIVE TO TOWN TO PICK UP MORE SUPPLIES.

...LONG DRIVE! I'M GLAD I HAVE THE CAR RADIO TO KEEP ME COMPANY!

WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST TO BRING YOU A NEWS BULLETIN! THREE ARMED AND DANGEROUS CONVICTS HAVE ESCAPED FROM STATE PENITENTIARY!...

STATE PENITENTIARY? SAY, THAT'S NOT VERY FAR FROM THE LODGE!

NEARBY RESIDENTS ARE WARNED TO STAY INDOORS, ALTHOUGH POLICE OFFICIALS EXPECT THE TRIO TO BE APPREHENDED SHORTLY! WE RETURN YOU NOW TO OUR STUDIO...

GEE, I HOPE DAD'LL BE ALL RIGHT! MAYBE I OUGHT TO TURN BACK!...NO... I GUESS HE'LL BE SAFE!

PURCHASING THE SUPPLIES TOOK LONGER THAN I EXPECTED. WHEN I FINISHED, I DECIDED TO HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE...

WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST TO BRING YOU A SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN! TWO OF THE THREE ESCAPEES FROM STATE PENITENTIARY HAVE BEEN CAUGHT! HOWEVER, THE THIRD, ALVIN CARCAS, IS STILL AT LARGE!

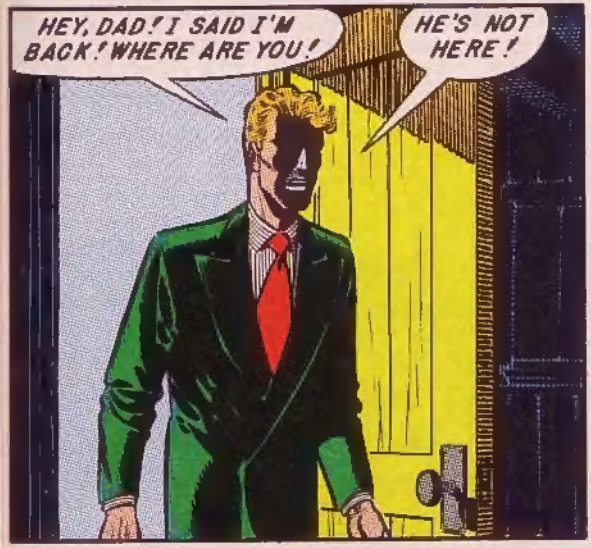
ALVIN CARCAS, CONVICTED OF KILLING THREE PERSONS, AND RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF TWO POLICE OFFICERS THIS AFTERNOON, IS BELIEVED HIDING IN THE VICINITY OF PINE LAKE! HE IS THE MOST VICIOUS OF THE THREE WHO ESCAPED, AND WILL KILL ON THE SLIGHTEST PROVOCATION...

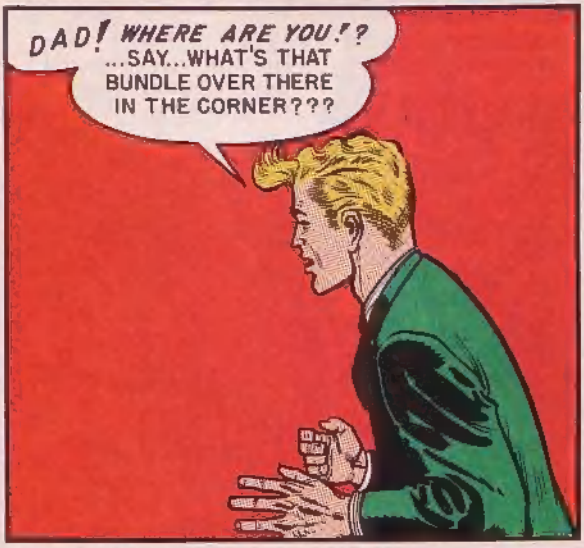
PINE LAKE! THAT'S WHERE THE LODGE IS! AND DAD'S ALL ALONE!

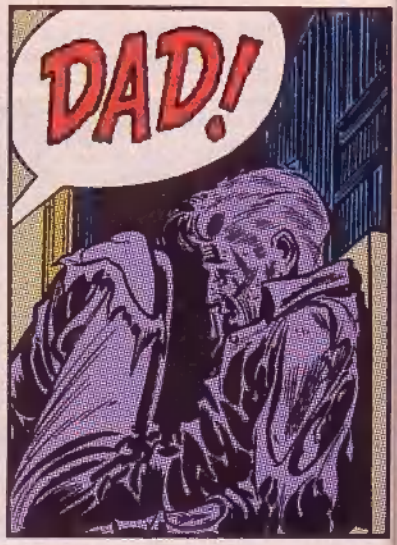
I SPED BACK TOWARDS THE LODGE! I WAS FRIGHTENED NOW... AFRAID THAT SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO DAD!

THE MILES FLEW BY BENEATH THE WHEELS! I HAD TO HURRY! I HAD BEEN CRAZY TO LEAVE DAD ALONE IN THE FIRST PLACE...

IT WAS AN ENDLESS DRIVE AND IT SEEMED LIKE AN ETERNITY BEFORE I SCREECHED TO A STOP IN FRONT OF THE LODGE...



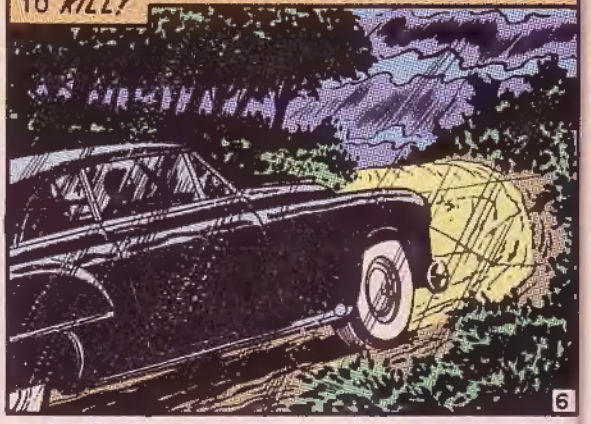




DAD WASN'T HURT BADLY, AND WHILE I PATCHED HIS CUTS AND BRUISES, HE LAPSED INTO SILENCE... A GLASSY, DAZED LOOK ON HIS FACE!

I HELPED HIM OUT TO THE CAR AND SAT HIM NEXT TO ME. HE KNEW WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO! AND I WAS GLAD THAT HE DIDN'T PROTEST...

WE DROVE FOR A LONG WHILE. NIGHT WAS SETTING IN AND IT BEGAN TO DRIZZLE. WE DROVE SLOWLY, OVER ALL THE DESERTED BACK-WOODS ROADS...SEARCHING FOR THE MAN I WAS TO *KILL!*



EVERY SO OFTEN I GLANCED AT DAD! HE SAT THERE SILENTLY, STARING DAZEDLY OUT THE CAR WINDOW. HE WAS SUFFERING FROM SHOCK BUT HE WANTED TO FIND THE CONVICT ALMOST AS MUCH AS I DID!
IT WAS GETTING DARKER NOW AND THE RAIN WAS COMING DOWN HEAVIER THAN BEFORE. THE LONGER IT TOOK TO SPOT THE KILLER, THE ANGRIER I BECAME! I WAS IMPATIENT TO WREAK MY REVENGE ON THE FILTHY SKUNK! I WANTED TO SEE HIM DEAD!
SUDDENLY, THE HEADLIGHTS PICKED OUT A FIGURE TRUDGING THE ROAD AHEAD OF US... A FIGURE WEARING HUNTING CLOTHES!
SON! THERE! HE'S THE ONE! HE'S THE ONE!
ALL THE HATRED I HELD FOR THAT ONE MAN ROSE WITHIN ME, CROWDING EVERYTHING ELSE FROM MY MIND! NOTHING ELSE MATTERED! I STEPPED ON THE ACCELERATOR.
MY ENTIRE BODY WAS TIGHTENED INTO A KNOT! DROPLETS OF SWEAT BURST OUT ON MY BROW AND THE MOTOR ROARED A DEATH CALL! BUT I HEARD NOTHING... I FELT NOTHING! EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD FADED... EXCEPT FOR THE LONE FIGURE IN THE ROAD.
SOMEHOW WE SKIDDED TO A STOP! I STEPPED OUT...TO MAKE CERTAIN I HAD DONE THE JOB WELL! AND WHEN I SAW THE BODY SPRAWLED GROTESQUELY ON THE MUDDY ROAD... I KNEW HE WAS DEAD!
7

ALL THE FURIOUS HATRED HAD LEFT ME NOW THAT IT WAS ALL OVER. I...I FELT EMPTY.. LIKE THERE WAS NOTHING INSIDE OF ME...LIKE MY BODY WAS ONLY A SHELL. AND I WAS SHAKING...

I...I GOT HIM FOR YOU, DAD! I GOT HIM FOR YOU. YOU'RE OKAY, NOW... EVERYTHING'S OKAY! WE...WE'LL GO BACK TO TOWN NOW...

SOMETIME LATER, WE STOPPED IN FRONT OF THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE. AS I SHUT OFF THE IGNITION, I SAW A MAN WAVING GOOD-NIGHT TO THE SHERIFF...PROBABLY A DEPUTY GOING OFF DUTY... AND HE WAS WEARING HUNTING CLOTHES...

SON! THERE! HE'S THE ONE! HE'S THE ONE!

SUDDENLY, I REALIZED WHAT A HORRIBLE MISTAKE I HAD MADE! DAD WAS OUT OF HIS MIND! HE *DIDN'T KNOW* WHO HAD BEATEN HIM...HE ONLY KNEW THE MAN WORE HUNTING CLOTHES!

I KNEW THEN I HAD KILLED AN INNOCENT MAN... AND THAT FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, DAD WOULD POINT TO EVERY MAN HE SAW WEARING HUNTING CLOTHES AND WHISPER "SON! THERE! HE'S THE ONE! HE'S THE ONE!" IN A DAZE, I PULLED AWAY FROM THE CURB AND DROVE OUT OF TOWN...

WE HAVE BEEN DRIVING FOR HOURS. THE STEADY HUM OF THE MOTOR AND THE SWISH-SWISHING OF THE WINDSHIELD WIPERS HAS DEADENED MY BRAIN UNTIL I DRIVE WITHOUT THINKING...ON AND ON... NEVER STOPPING... NEVER WANTING TO STOP... *AFRAID* TO STOP! AND AS OUR CAR TRAVELS THE ENDLESS MILES OF HIGHWAY, MY MIND DRIFTS BACK THROUGH TIME... THROUGH THE PAST WEEKS ...MONTHS... YEARS... AND I AM A YOUNG BOY AGAIN...

THE END...

DEATH'S DOUBLE-CROSS

W. ALLAN WOOD

I HAD BEEN MARRIED TO JOHN DRAKELY FOR TWO YEARS! TWO *LONG* YEARS...TWO YEARS OF *NOTHING* ...TWO YEARS OF *SHEER BOREDOM*...

MORE COFFEE, JOHN?

WHA?..OH..YES!

OH, IN THE BEGINNING IT WAS *FUN!* I HAD *EVERYTHING* I WANTED...CLOTHES, JEWELRY, A FINE HOME, SERVANTS! BUT AS THE MONTHS WENT BY, I REALIZED THAT MONEY AND LUXURIES WEREN'T *ENOUGH* ...THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING *MISSING!* I WANTED *LOVE*...

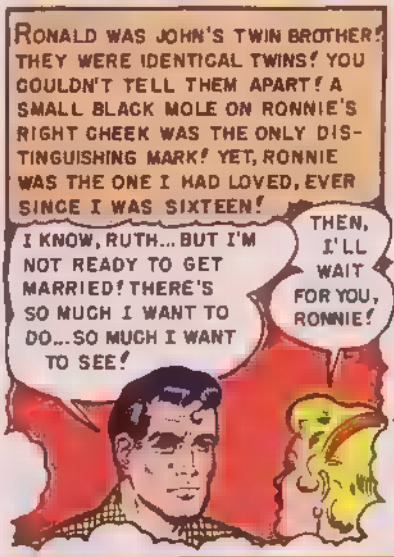
I'LL BE HOME LATE, RUTH! DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME! YOU KNOW HOW THESE BOARD MEETINGS ARE!

YES, JOHN!

IT WAS LIKE THAT ALL THE TIME! AT BREAKFAST, IT WAS HIS PAPER! THEN THE OFFICE! AT NIGHT, THE CLUB...CARDS ...MEETINGS...BUSINESS DEALS! I WAS *LONELY!* TO JOHN, I WAS THE PERFECT WIFE...A PICTURE TO GRACE HIS LUXURIOUS HOME...ANOTHER OF HIS "POSSESSIONS"! AFTER HE LEFT, I RUSHED TO MY ROOM AND FLUNG MYSELF UPON THE BED, CRYING...

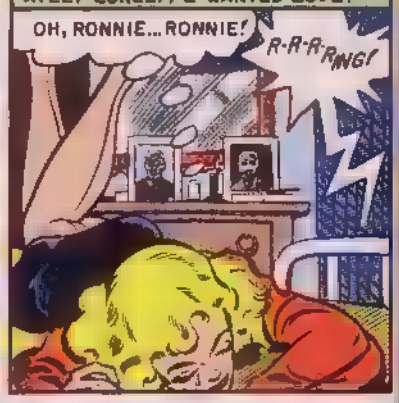
I REMEMBERED THE NIGHT JOHN HAD ASKED ME TO MARRY HIM! I WAS FRIGHTENED AND LONELY *THEN, TOO!*

RONALD WAS JOHN'S TWIN BROTHER! THEY WERE IDENTICAL TWINS! YOU COULDN'T TELL THEM APART! A SMALL BLACK MOLE ON RONNIE'S RIGHT CHEEK WAS THE ONLY DISTINGUISHING MARK! YET, RONNIE WAS THE ONE I HAD LOVED, EVER SINCE I WAS SIXTEEN!

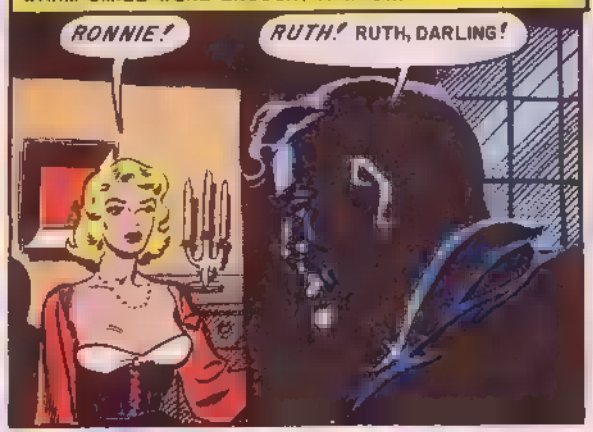


RONNIE WAS AN ADVENTURER! HE WOULD GO AWAY FOR MONTHS AT A TIME! HE'D WORK A FREIGHTER TO CHINA...JOIN A CANADIAN LOGGING CAMP...DO ANYTHING THAT PROMISED THRILLS AND EXCITEMENT! BUT I GREW *TIRED* OF WAITING FOR HIM! AND SO...

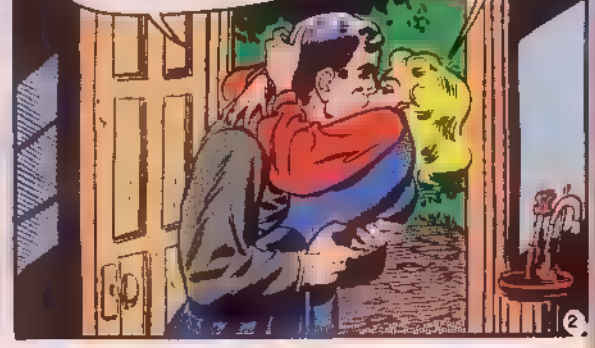
BUT NOW I WAS SORRY! I REALIZED THAT I HAD MADE A MISTAKE SOON AFTER I MARRIED JOHN! HE WAS AMBITIOUS...INTENSE! HIS WHOLE LIFE WAS HIS WORK! I WAS DESPERATELY LONELY! I WANTED *LOVE!*



THE DOORBELL SHOCKED ME OUT OF MY REVERIE! I DRIED MY EYES AND WENT DOWNSTAIRS! AS I OPENED THE DOOR, MY HEART STOPPED! I DIDN'T HAVE TO LOOK FOR THE SMALL BLACK MOLE! HIS FLASHING EYES AND WARM SMILE WERE ENOUGH! IT WAS...



HE TOOK ME IN HIS STRONG ARMS AND I DID NOT RESIST! IT HAD BEEN SO LONG...SO LONG!



THE LONGING OF TWO YEARS SPILLED OVER AND I GAVE MY YEARNING LIPS TO HIS...UNRESTRAINED!

WHEN MY SURGE OF EMOTION HAD SUBSIDED, RONNIE PUSHED ME AWAY AND LOOKED INTO MY EYES, SEARCHINGLY...

WHY DID YOU DO IT, RUTH? WHY DIDN'T YOU WAIT AS YOU SAID YOU WOULD? WHY DID YOU *MARRY* HIM?

OH, RONNIE! I COULDN'T HELP IT! YOU WERE GONE! I ...I DON'T KNOW WHY...I DON'T KNOW...

IT WAS A MISTAKE... A *TERRIBLE* MISTAKE, RONNIE! I NEVER LOVED HIM! IT WAS *YOU* I'VE ALWAYS LOVED! CAN YOU EVER *FORGIVE* ME?

RUTH... DEAREST! I NEVER BLAMED YOU, ENTIRELY! I NEGLECTED YOU!

I'LL *DIVORCE* HIM RONNIE! WE CAN BE *HAPPY, YET!* IF HE WON'T GIVE ME MY FREEDOM... I'LL *LEAVE* HIM AND WE CAN GO AWAY *TOGETHER!*

LET'S...LET'S NOT BE TOO HASTY, RUTH! PERHAPS WE CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT!

HE GLANCED AROUND! I COULD SEE HIS EYES EAGERLY ABSORBING THE LUXURY THAT I LIVED IN! I KNEW THAT HE WANTED IT...WE *BOTH* WANTED IT...

PERHAPS...PERHAPS JOHN MIGHT HAVE... AN ACCIDENT! YOU'D STILL HAVE...ALL THIS...AND YOU'D BE FREE TO...REMARRY!

RONNIE! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

I ACTED SHOCKED...BUT I WAS NOT! RONNIE WAS THINKING WHAT *I* WAS THINKING...

WHEN JOHN COMES HOME, HE'LL PROBABLY INVITE ME TO STAY THE NIGHT. I'LL SUGGEST AN *EARLY MORNING SWIM*... AND...NO ONE WILL EVER SUSPECT! NO ONE KNOWS I'M HERE!

YOU MEAN... *DROWN* HIM!

AN *ACCIDENT!* YOU'LL SEE IT FROM YOUR WINDOW... CALL THE POLICE! IT'LL BE *EASY!*

WHAT WAS *THAT?*

IT WAS *JOHN!* HE WAS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY! I FELT THE BLOOD...HOT AND BURNING...RUSH TO MY CHEEKS! HAD HE HEARD? THERE WAS A SPLIT SECOND OF SILENCE THAT SEEMED LIKE AN ETERNITY...THEN...

RONNIE! YOU'RE BACK! IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

JOHN! YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT! EXCEPT FOR YOUR GREAT SUCCESS!

I WATCHED THEM AS THEY LAUGHED AND CHATTERED! I FELT RELIEVED! JOHN HAD *NOT* HEARD US! THEY STOOD THERE...THE TWINS...SO IDENTICAL...EXCEPT FOR RONNIE'S MOLE...AND YET SO DIFFERENT...

OF COURSE YOU'LL STAY WITH US WHILE YOU'RE HERE, RONNIE!

WHY IT'S VERY GOOD OF YOU TO OFFER, JOHN! I ACCEPT!

RONNIE STROLLED TO THE BIG PICTURE WINDOW LOOKING OUT OVER THE LAKE...

THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL VIEW YOU HAVE JOHN! THE LAKE IS SURE INVITING!

WHAT SAY WE TAKE AN EARLY SWIM TOMORROW!

I HAD TO CONTROL MYSELF FROM BREAKING INTO HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER! RONNIE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO *SET* THE TRAP! JOHN HAD DONE IT FOR HIM!

SOUNDS LIKE A WONDERFUL IDEA, JOHN! SAY...ABOUT EIGHT...

GOOD! I'LL LEND YOU A SUIT! AND NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE TO TURN IN! RUTH WILL SHOW YOU *YOUR* ROOM!

WE WATCHED AS HE CLIMBED THE STAIRS! WHEN WE HEARD THE DOOR CLOSE, RONNIE TOOK ME IN HIS ARMS...

WHAT LUCK! THIS IS GOING TO BE EASY...*EASY!*

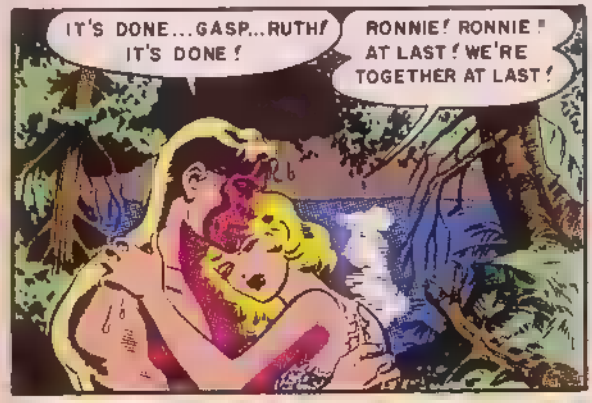
I'M AFRAID... RONNIE! I'M *AFRAID!*

IN MY BED THAT NIGHT, I TOSSED AND TURNED...UNABLE TO FALL ASLEEP! MY THOUGHTS WERE WILD TERRIBLE THOUGHTS...AND WHEN I FINALLY CLOSED MY EYES, IT WAS ONLY TO SLIP OFF INTO A NIGHTMARE OF DARK WATER AND CLUTCHING HANDS! SUDDENLY I WAS AWAKENED BY...

AAAAGH!

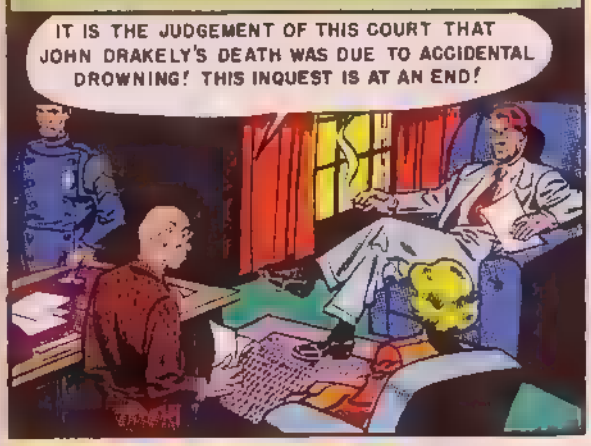
I RUSHED TO THE WINDOW! OUT ON THE LAKE, RONNIE AND JOHN WERE STRUGGLING! AND AS I WATCHED... JOHN DISAPPEARED BELOW THE SURFACE! ONCE, A HAND BROKE FORTH... CLUTCHING AT THE AIR...

THEN IT WAS GONE! RONNIE TURNED AND STARTED TO SWIM TO SHORE. I SLIPPED ON A ROBE AND RUSHED DOWNSTAIRS! HE EMERGED FROM THE LAKE, WET AND SILVERY IN THE MORNING SUN!



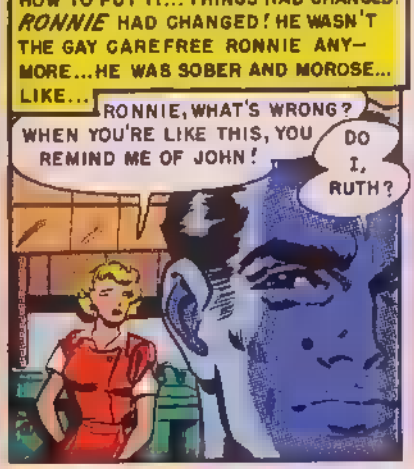
I CLUNG TO HIM FOR A MINUTE...AND THEN...

A LINGERING KISS, AND THEN HE WAS GONE! THE NEXT MONTH WAS A NIGHTMARE! FIRST... THE DRAGGING OF THE LAKE FOR THE BODY! IT TOOK THEM SEVERAL DAYS TO FIND IT! I DIDN'T GO DOWN TO LOOK AT IT! I KNEW I'D BE SICK! THEN, THE INQUEST...

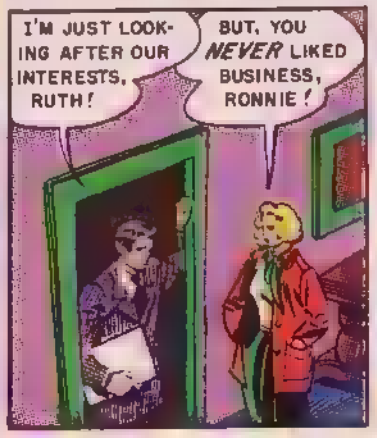


IT WAS ALL OVER! WE WERE SAFE! RONNIE AND I WERE SAFE! AND THE HOUSE, THE MONEY...EVERYTHING WAS *ALL MINE*... AND *HIS*!

WEEKS PASSED! RONNIE AND I WERE MARRIED...BUT...I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PUT IT...THINGS HAD CHANGED! *RONNIE* HAD CHANGED! HE WASN'T THE GAY CAREFREE RONNIE ANYMORE...HE WAS SOBER AND MOROSE... LIKE...



HE DID, TOO! HE TIRED OF ME QUICKLY... AND SPENT MORE AND MORE TIME AWAY FROM ME! HE STARTED TO GO INTO THE OFFICE...



AND THEN... ONE NIGHT...

REMOVED? BUT WHY? WHY DID YOU WAIT UNTIL NOW, RONNIE?
I NEVER COULD AFFORD TO HAVE IT DONE RIGHT, BEFORE! THE DOCTOR SAYS IT WON'T LEAVE A TRACE!
I DON'T NEED IT ANYMORE, RUTH! I USED TO BE PROUD OF IT! IT WAS THE ONLY THING THAT I HAD THAT JOHN DIDN'T HAVE! HE HAD SUCCESS... POSITION... WEALTH! HE EVEN HAD YOU! BUT NOW, I'VE GOT THOSE THINGS! ALL OF THEM! SO I DON'T NEED THE MOLE ANYMORE... DO I? JOHN'S DEAD... ISN'T HE? ISN'T HE?
RONNIE... YOU'RE HURTING ME!
I WAS FRIGHTENED! RONNIE WAS DIFFERENT! IN A FEW WEEKS THE BANDAGE WAS REMOVED... AND THERE WAS NO TRACE OF WHERE THE MOLE HAD BEEN! HE REMINDED ME MORE OF JOHN THAN EVER!
GOOD JOB... EH, RUTH?
YES, RONNIE! VERY GOOD!
A STRANGE FEELING OF UNEASINESS BEGAN TO COME OVER ME ■ THE NEXT FEW WEEKS! I KEPT SEEING MORE AND MORE OF JOHN IN EVERYTHING THAT RONNIE DID...
MORE COFFEE, RONNIE?
WHA? OH... YES!
HE HAD TAKEN MORE AND MORE OF AN INTEREST IN THE BUSINESS THAT JOHN HAD LEFT ME... AND SOON, HE WAS RUNNING IT COMPLETELY! CAREFREE, GAY RONNIE! I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT! THEN ONE DAY...
THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW, MRS. DRAKELY!
THANK YOU!
I HAD BEEN HAVING HEADACHES, AND HAD GONE TO THE DOCTOR... OUR FAMILY DOCTOR! AS I WAS LEAVING...
OH, AND I WANTED TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON THE WONDERFUL JOB YOU DID ■ REMOVING MY HUSBAND'S MOLE, DOCTOR!
YOUR HUSBAND'S MOLE? WHY HE HASN'T BEEN HERE FOR ANYTHING LIKE THAT!
AS I DROVE HOME, THAT FEELING OF UNEASINESS I HAD BEEN HAVING BECAME A FEELING OF TERROR! I COULD NOT PUT IT OUT OF MY MIND ANY LONGER! I WAS FRIGHTENED!
SUPPOSE JOHN HAD OVERHEARD US THE NIGHT WE PLANNED HIS MURDER...?

WHEN I GOT HOME, I QUESTIONED RONNIE ABOUT WHAT THE DOCTOR HAD SAID...

OH, NO! I DIDN'T GO TO *THAT* OLD BUTCHER! I WENT TO A SPECIALIST IN TOWN!

OH, I SEE!

IT WAS A VALID EXCUSE, AND I DIDN'T WANT TO PURSUE THE SUBJECT ANY FURTHER! ASKING WHAT THE SPECIALIST'S NAME WAS WOULD ONLY HAVE MADE MATTERS WORSE! RONNIE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT I WAS *CHECKING* ON HIM!

WELL, I'VE GOT TO BE LEAVING NOW, RUTH! DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME. YOU KNOW HOW BOARD-MEETINGS ARE!

YES, RONNIE!

IT WAS NERVE-WRACKING! PERHAPS JOHN *HAD* KNOWN! WHAT IF HE HAD BEEN *PREPARED*? WHEN RONNIE AND HE WENT SWIMMING, *JOHN* MIGHT HAVE DROWNED *HIM!*

BUT WHY WOULD JOHN WANT TO WEAR A FALSE MOLE...TO TAKE *RONNIE'S* PLACE? WHY?

SNAP!

I HAD BEEN SITTING IN MY FAVORITE CHAIR! SUDDENLY I GOT UP! I DON'T KNOW WHY! PERHAPS IT WAS A SIXTH SENSE! THE NEXT THING I KNEW...

CRASH!

LATER, AFTER I HAD RECOVERED FROM MY FRIGHT, I NOTICED THAT MY CHAIR HAD BEEN MOVED...JUST ABOUT TWO FEET...TO DIRECTLY UNDER WHERE THE HUGE CHANDELIER HAD BEEN HANGING...

HE'S TRYING TO *KILL* ME! THAT'S IT! HE'S TRYING TO *MURDER* ME!

AND ONLY YESTERDAY, AS I WAS ENTERING THE BUILDING WHERE JOHN...ER...*RONALD'S* OFFICE IS...

LOOK OUT LADY!

GREAT SCOTT! IT ALMOST *KILLED* HER!

THE SAFE WAS A NEW ONE! IT WAS BEING MOVED INTO THE BUILDING WHEN IT FELL! AND *ON* IT...IN FRESH NEW LETTERS, WAS PAINTED "DRAKELY, INC."!

SO YOU SEE! I *THINK* HE'S TRYING TO KILL ME! OF COURSE, THESE INCIDENTS *MIGHT* HAVE BEEN *ACCIDENTS*...I *DON'T KNOW!* BUT...WHAT CAN I *THINK!* *WHO* AM I *MARRIED* TO *NOW?* *RONNIE*, WHO KILLED MY HUSBAND...THEN HAD HIS MOLE REMOVED? OR *JOHN*, WHO OVERHEARD OUR PLAN AND DECIDED TO ACT *FIRST*...DROWNED *RONNIE*, DONNED A *FALSE MOLE*, HAD IT *CONVENIENTLY* "*REMOVED*" AND IS NOW TRYING TO *PUNISH* ME BY *KILLING* ME? HOW CAN I KNOW? I'M SCARED! I'M SICK...*I DON'T KNOW! DO YOU?*

REWARD!

Carstairs moved stealthily toward the bamboo hut, keeping as close to the shadows as possible. A mottled cloud blotted out the moon momentarily and he dashed several yards to the clump of jungle shrub nearest the tiny entrance. He paused with one hand resting on the side of the hut, looking around him to see if anyone had spotted him. There was no sound issuing from the jungle clearing in which the hut stood like a solitary sentinel . . . he had been undetected. In just a few more moments he would have the fabulous Kessler Diamond in his hands! No one . . . not even Ngami, the native prospector . . . could keep it from him!

Carstairs slipped into the hut, his eyes quickly becoming accustomed to the darkness. Over against the far wall he saw the mat spread across the dirt floor . . . and on it reposed the motionless body of Ngami! Carstairs' search was over at last . . . this trail which he had followed for so many months across the deadliest mountains and jungles on Earth was about to yield up its reward to him!

Carstairs bent over the quiet figure on the mat, moving his hand so that it rested over Ngami's heart. The man was cold as marble . . . there was not the slightest flutter inside the tattered blouse! Carstairs leaned over and touched his ear to the native's chest. Ngami was DEAD! He peeled back the tattered blouse and with shaking fingers broke the cord which held the little cloth bag around Ngami's throat. He opened it, and the gem he extracted sent its multi-colored shafts of light to the farthest corner of the hut. This was the end of the trail . . . now that he had finally tracked Ngami down, the Kessler Diamond was his! Carstairs had gotten his reward!

After a moment he slipped quietly out of the hut, past the voices he heard approaching through the brush. In a moment Carstairs was gone!

* * * * *

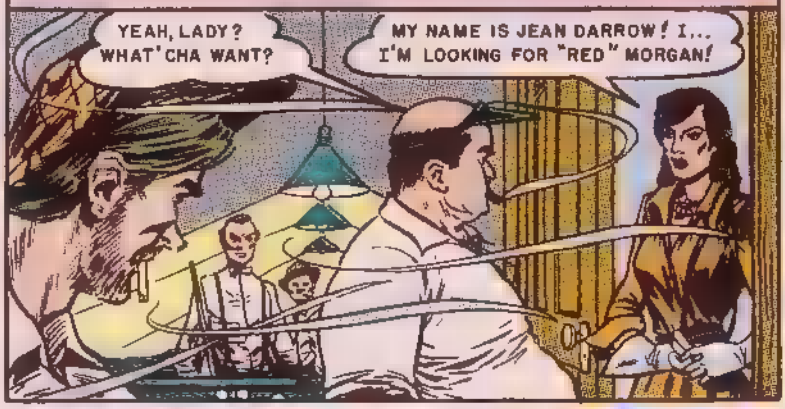
The first native tossed the firebrand against Ngami's hut and watched the bamboo shelter burst into flame, the dark smoke billowing around it.

"*Bubonic Plague* . . . very bad thing!" the native said, the weird shadows of the consuming fire dancing on his face as he watched the blaze. "We burn the hut and Ngami's body with it . . . so that no one get deadly illness which kill *him!* From fire there will be left no body for anyone to touch . . . for to come near the flesh of a plague victim . . . even to touch it slightly . . . is to die in agony from *Bubonic Plague* also!"

WHEN THE PICTURE LOOKS BAD. . . BE CAREFUL! DON'T LET IT BECOME. . . a

SNAPSHOT OF DEATH!

IT WAS A *DINGY* POOLROOM! THE DIM LIGHTS ABOVE THE GREEN TABLES CUT THROUGH A FOG OF CIGARETTE SMOKE! THE LOUD TALK AND LAUGHTER FELL INTO SILENCE AS SHE OPENED THE DOOR! IT WAS NOT THE KIND OF A PLACE ONE WOULD FIND A WOMAN. . . ESPECIALLY A WELL-DRESSED WOMAN! A SHORT FAT MAN WEARING A GREEN EYE SHADE STEPPED FORWARD. . .



THE SHORT FAT MAN MUMBLED SOMETHING ABOUT FOLLOWING HIM TO THE BACK ROOM, AND LED HER PAST LEERING FACES. . . FACES WITH EYES THAT BURNED AS THEY STUDIED HER. . .

HE OPENED A BATTERED DOOR TO A DARK ROOM! A SINGLE LAMP HUNG OVER A TABLE COVERED WITH DIRTY PLAYING CARDS! A HARD-FACED MAN, WHO LOOKED SEEDY ■ SPITE OF HIS EXPENSIVE CLOTHES, ROSE TO GREET HER...
OKAY, LOUIE! CLOSE THE DOOR BEHIND YOU!
ARE YOU "RED" MORGAN?
THE MAN CALLED LOUIE TOOK A FINAL LINGERING LOOK AT THE WOMAN AND LEFT!
YEAH! I'M "RED" MORGAN! SIT DOWN, MRS. DARROW! LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS!
YES, SIR!
YOU GOT A PICTURE OF THE DAME YOU WANT KNOCKED OFF?
YES, I HAVE ONE WITH ME! BUT FIRST... THERE ARE SOME CONDITIONS...
YOU ARE TO DO THE JOB SUDDENLY... WITHOUT WARNING! SHE MUST NEVER KNOW IT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN! IT MUST BE SHORT... QUICK... WITHOUT PAIN! UNDERSTAND?
CHECK, LADY! IT'LL BE LIKE YOU SAY! NOW GIMMIE THE PICTURE... AND THE DOUGH...
WAIT! THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE! YOU... YOU MUSTN'T DO THE JOB! IT HAS TO BE SOMEONE ELSE... SOMEONE I DON'T KNOW...
S'MATTER? YOU THINK I'M CRAZY? I NEVER DO THIS WORK! I HIRE A "TRIGGER-MAN"!
THAT'S GOOD! I'VE WRITTEN THE ADDRESS ON THE BACK! HERE'S YOUR MONEY... AND THE PICTURE...
OKAY! DON'T WORRY! THIS DAME HASN'T GOT MUCH TIME... NOW! SHE... HEY!
THIS PICTURE! THIS HERE DAME... IT'S... IT'S YOU! THIS IS A PICTURE OF YOU!

YES! IT *WAS* HER PICTURE! SHE.. JEAN DARROW...WAS HIRING SOMEONE TO KILL *HERSELF!* WHY? YOU ASK *WHY?* JEAN WAS THINKING ABOUT *WHY*, TOO! HER THOUGHTS WENT BACK TO THAT DAY IN DOCTOR HARTLEY'S OFFICE...

TELL ME DOCTOR! TELL ME THE TRUTH!

IT'S *BAD*, JEAN! *VERY BAD!* YOU *WON'T LIVE SIX MONTHS!*

DID YOU EVER WONDER HOW IT WOULD FEEL TO KNOW... ALMOST TO THE DAY WHEN YOU WOULD DIE? TO BE ABLE TO COUNT THE WEEKS, THE HOURS, THE MINUTES, TILL THE END? WELL, JEAN DARROW WAS IN THAT POSITION! AND SHE COULDN'T STAND IT

SIX MONTHS TO LIVE!

ONLY SIX MORE MONTHS!

NO...NO...I'LL KILL MYSELF FIRST...

SUICIDE! SUICIDE! SUICIDE!

SHE COULDN'T FACE IT...THE WAITING, THE SLOW DEATH! SHE HAD DECIDED TO KILL HERSELF! AND THEN...SHE DISCOVERED..

OH, *NO*...SOB, SOB...I CAN'T! *I CAN'T!* I HAVEN'T GOT THE *NERVE!*

AND THAT WAS *WHY* SHE WAS THERE! IN THAT DINGY BACK ROOM...BUYING HER DESTRUCTION...

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? THIS YOUR TWIN?

NO...IT'S ME! DON'T ASK QUESTIONS!

YOU *HAVE* YOUR MONEY! NOW, HIRE YOUR GUNMAN... AND *DO* THE JOB! *"WHY"* IS MY OWN BUSINESS! JUST REMEMBER YOUR PART OF THE BARGAIN! QUICK...WITHOUT PAIN...WITHOUT WARNING!

BACK THROUGH THE SMOKE-FILLED POOL-ROOM... PAST THE DIRTY GREEN TABLES.. THE LEERING FACES. THE WHISTLES AND CATCALLS...AND OUT THE DOOR INTO THE STREET, SHE PUSHED!

SIGH WELL! IT'S DONE! SOMETIME SOON... IT'LL BE ALL OVER!

BILLIARDS

ACE SOCI CLU

JEAN DARROW HAILED A CAB, AND GOT IN! IT TOO HER FROM THE CROWDED SLUM WHERE SHE HAD BEEN TO A CLEAN-SMELLING ATTRACTIVE RESIDENTIAL SUBURB! SHE GOT OUT IN FRONT OF A WHITE HOUSE, AND WENT IN...

FRANK! YOU'RE HOME EARLY! AND WHO'S THAT WITH YOU?

DR. HARTLEY! AND HE HAS SOME WONDERFUL NEWS, DEAR! *WONDERFUL NEWS!*

AN ICY HAND CLUTCHED AT JEAN'S HEART! DR. HARTLEY...WITH WONDERFUL NEWS? IT *COULD* MEAN..

JEAN, DEAR! I *KNOW* THIS WILL *SHOCK YOU* BUT... WELL, I SENT THAT SPECIMEN ON TO THE MAYER CLINIC...AND THEIR REPORT, WHICH I JUST RECEIVED, CHANGES *EVERYTHING!* WITH AN OPERATION, A NOT-TOO-DIFFICULT ONE, YOU HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF A *CURE*...

I... I... OHHHH!

HERE, JEAN! DRINK THIS! IT WILL BRACE YOU UP!

YOU...YOU MEAN I'M... GOING TO *LIVE!*

THAT'S *RIGHT!* WELL, I MUST BE OFF! HAVE THAT PRESCRIPTION FILLED, FRANK!

THE DOCTOR TOOK HIS HAT AND BAG AND LEFT! FRANK GOT UP...

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, FRANK?

I'LL GET THIS PRESCRIPTION FOR YOU! IT WILL SETTLE YOUR NERVES!

DON'T *LEAVE* ME, FRANK! DON'T LEAVE ME *ALONE!*

DON'T BE *SILLY*, JEAN! YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT UNTIL I COME BACK!

FRANK WENT OUT AND JEAN WAS ALONE! SHE WATCHED UNTIL HE TURNED THE CORNER AND WAS OUT OF SIGHT! THEN SHE RUSHED TO THE PHONE!

I...I'D LIKE THE TELEPHONE NUMBER OF A POOLROOM ON DOCK STREET, AT RIVER ROAD... HURRY!

NERVOUSLY JEAN DIALED THE NUMBER! IT RANG...ONCE... TWICE... THREE TIMES!

SOB...ANSWER IT! ANSWER IT!

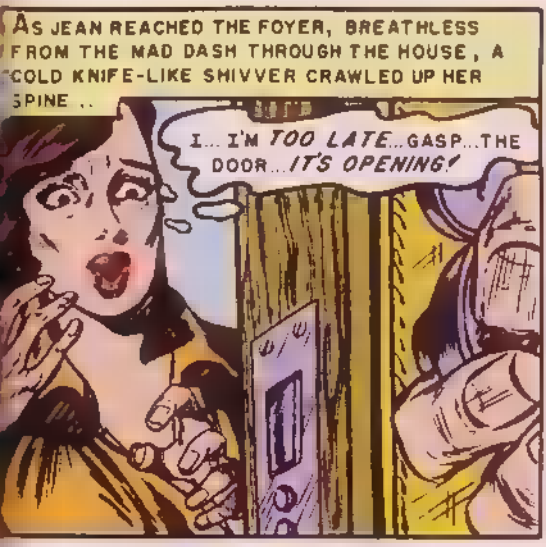
PLEASE...SOB

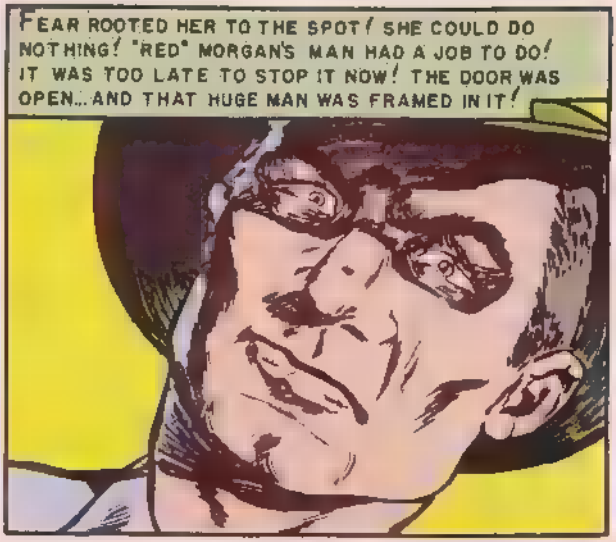
HELLO?

"*RED*" *MORGAN!* LET ME SPEAK TO HIM... *PLEASE!*

SORRY LADY... HE'S *GONE OUT!* WON'T BE BACK...

JEAN DIDN'T EVEN HEAR THE REST ! HER GAZE HAD MOVED OUT THE WINDOW...OUT ACROSS THE STREET..
THAT CAR...THAT BLACK CAR...IT... JUST PULLED UP!
HE WAS HERE...HERE ALREADY ! HERE TO KILL HER! "RED" MORGAN WAS CERTAINLY FAST ! HE WASTED NO TIME! JEAN PEERED OUT THROUGH THE PARTIALLY CLOSED VENETIAN BLINDS!
THERE ISN'T ANYONE IN THE CAR ! HE... OOOH! THE BACK DOOR-BELL...
R-R-R-R-ING
QUIETLY JEAN TIP-TOED TO THE BACK DOOR! SHE COULD SEE THROUGH THE TRANSLUCENT GLASS THE SILHOUETTE OF A HUGE MAN...
WHAT WILL I DO? WHAT CAN I DO?
SUDDENLY, STARK TERROR SEIZED HER! HER EYES HAD FALLEN UPON..
THE DOOR ! IT'S NOT LOCKED.. AND...THE CHAIN IS OPEN...
THE DOORNOB WAS BEGINING TO TURN! THERE WASN'T MUCH TIME... JEAN DARTED FORWARD AND...
THERE!
THE MAN OUTSIDE RATTLED THE DOOR A FEW TIMES, TRYING TO SHAKE THE CHAIN LOOSE...THEN CLOSED IT... AND HIS FOOTSTEPS FADED AWAY!
HE...HE MUST BE GOING TO THE FRONT DOOR...
FRANTICALLY JEAN RUSHED THROUGH THE HOUSE! THE FRONT DOOR WAS UNLOCKED ALSO! SHE REMEMBERED NOTICING THAT WHEN SHE CAME IN...
I'VE GOT TO LOCK IT BEFORE HE GETS THERE.


AS JEAN REACHED THE FOYER, BREATHLESS FROM THE MAD DASH THROUGH THE HOUSE, A COLD KNIFE-LIKE SHIVVER CRAWLED UP HER SPINE ..
I... I'M TOO LATE...GASP...THE DOOR...IT'S OPENING!


FEAR ROOTED HER TO THE SPOT! SHE COULD DO NOTHING! "RED" MORGAN'S MAN HAD A JOB TO DO! IT WAS TOO LATE TO STOP IT NOW! THE DOOR WAS OPEN...AND THAT HUGE MAN WAS FRAMED IN IT!

HE STEPPED FORWARD, BOTH HANDS IN HIS POCKETS! HIS BEADY LITTLE EYES SURVEYED HER! THEN HE DREW FORTH A SMALL WHITE SQUARE...
THIS LOOKS LIKE A PICTURE OF YOU... LADY!
OOOOOOH!

EVERYTHING WENT BLACK! THE BLUE AND WHITE LIGHTS FLASHING IN JEAN'S BRAIN TOLD HER THAT SHE HAD FAINTED...AND THAT PERHAPS IT WAS BETTER THAT WAY! THEN A STRANGE, SICKENING SMELL BURNED HER NOSTRILS AND SHE OPENED HER EYES! FRANK WAS THERE...AND THAT MAN!

FRANK... THAT MAN HE... HE...
HE'S A POLICEMAN, DARLING! HE'S COME TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS! YOU FAINTED!

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, LADY! WE FOUND THIS PICTURE IN THE POCKET OF A RED-HEADED GUY WHO GOT KILLED BY A TRUCK OUTSIDE A POOL-ROOM! IT HAD YOUR ADDRESS ON THE BACK! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW IT GOT THERE...AND WHO THE RED-HEADED GUY WAS?

WHY...NO, OFFICER! I... HAVEN'T... ANY IDEA HOW IT GOT THERE! NO...IDEA... AT.. ALL!
THE END

DOUBLE INDEMNITY!

He slammed the wrench down hard against her head, and his wife slumped forward on the front seat of the car, a barely perceptible sigh escaping her lips. In a moment he was out of the car and running up the road, to the break in the trees where a rough clearing looked out over the thickly-wooded valley below.

"This is a perfect spot to try it," he thought, as his heart stopped pounding in his chest and he felt his breath returning. "After the car crashes through this clearing and goes over the edge of the cliff just ahead . . . it must be a fall of three, maybe four hundred feet! No one'll ever survive a fall like THAT!"

Holding tight to the branches of a tree, he leaned far over and peered down the almost vertical wall. "Even after they recover the car . . . there won't be enough left of her for the Police to know HOW it all happened!"

He turned and ran back to the car, his grin spreading when he saw that his wife hadn't budged from the spot in which he had left her. "With that Double-Indemnity insurance I took out on her a couple months back," he thought as the engine started with a roar, "it'll mean *fifty-thousand dollars* to me when they discover her body!"

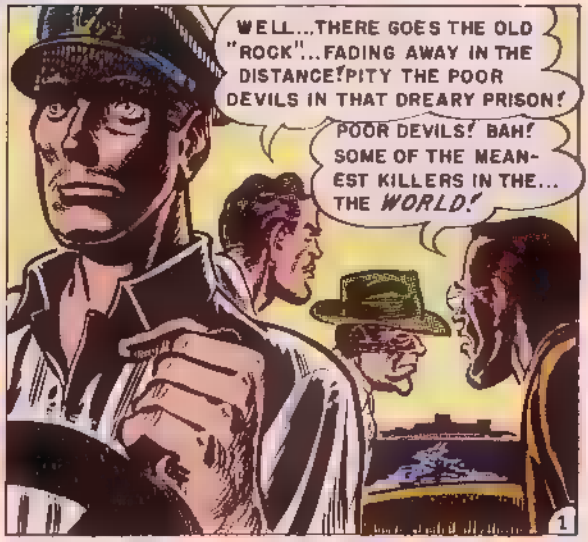
He nursed the car up the road and eased it carefully into the clearing from which he had viewed the valley a few minutes before. "I'll just jockey it into position," he said, climbing out of the car and closing the door behind him. He reached back through the opened window and his hands began to turn the steering wheel. With one foot on the running board he pushed the car toward the precipitous cliff-edge, his face growing crimson with the exertion.

"One 1-last push," he gasped, his other foot pushing against the ground as if he was propelling a skooter, "one m-more shove . . . and the car'll go over the side as if it was shot out of the mouth of a cannon! With that new insurance policy . . . this is really a *double* job . . . like killing her *twice* and collecting for it!"

The car began to roll forward of its own momentum now, and he started to leap from its side. But a scream escaped from him . . . *something* was holding him fast to the plunging vehicle! Frantically he tried to break free . . . he shrieked, clawing at the air, his legs thrashing wildly! The car started on its awful twisting descent, with the man still wrenching at the coat-sleeve which had become snarled in the door . . . still trying to prevent this *double* job he had planned so carefully!

IT'S HIGH NOON! THE SUN BEATS DOWN ON A TINY ISLAND WHERE FOUR MEN BOARD THE SMALL MAIL-BOAT THAT WILL TAKE THEM BACK TO THE MAINLAND... A PRIVILEGE ENJOYED BY FEW OF THE ISLANDERS! FOR YOU SEE, THIS IS AN ISLAND OF THE DAMNED... A *PRISON ISLAND!* ALSO, CLIMBING HIGH IN THE SKY, IS THE FAINT CRESCENT OF THE MOON... WAITING FOR NIGHT! AND WHENEVER THE MOON IS HIGH OVERHEAD, THE SEA STRAINS UP TOWARDS IT, AND THEN IT'S...

HIGH TIDE!



SAY, SKIPPER! IT'S AN HOUR TRIP TO THE MAINLAND! ISN'T THAT A RADIO THERE? HOWZABOUT TUNING IN SOME HAPPY MUSIC TO MAKE THE TIME PASS EASIER?

WHY CERTAINLY, SIR!

OH THAT *SAINT LOU-IS WO-MAN* WITH HER... LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST TO BRING YOU A NEWS BULLETIN...

HEY--WHAT--

SH---LISTEN---

...A PRISONER ESCAPED TODAY FROM THE SUPPOSEDLY ESCAPE-PROOF MEPHISTO PRISON...

...THE PRISON IS ON AN ISLAND 30 MILES OFF SHORE...AND TO TRY TO SWIM THE DISTANCE IS ALMOST CERTAIN DEATH...

...THE ONLY OTHER ESCAPE ROUTE WAS BY THE CAREFULLY CHECKED MAIL-BOAT WHICH IS ON ITS WAY BACK TO THE MAINLAND RIGHT NOW!

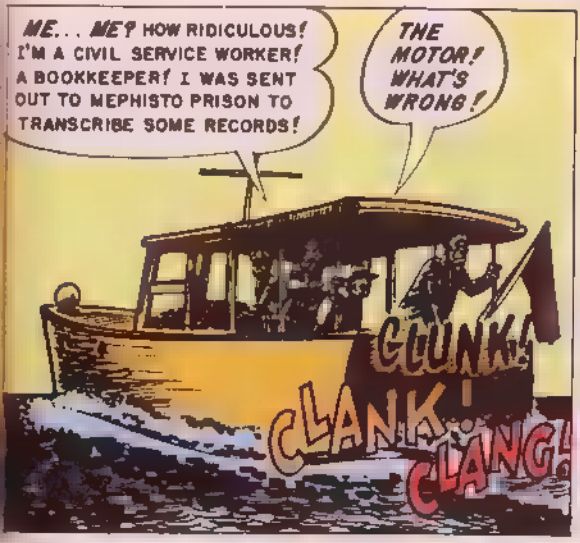
...THE ESCAPED CONVICT IS A RUTHLESS MURDERER! HE WILL NOT HESITATE FOR A MOMENT TO KILL...

A KILLER! ONE OF YOU IS A KILLER! WHO IS IT? SPEAK UP! SKIPPER! CAN'T YOU CALL THE POLICE?!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WE'RE KILLERS! HOW DO WE KNOW *YOU'RE* NOT THE KILLER! *I'M* CERTAINLY NOT A CONVICT! I WAS VISITING MY BROTHER!

AND I'M A LAWYER, YOU PASTY-FACED RAT! WHO ARE *YOU*?

EASY, MEN! I'VE JUST CONTACTED THE POLICE, AND THEY'LL BE WAITING FOR US *ALL* WHEN WE DOCK!

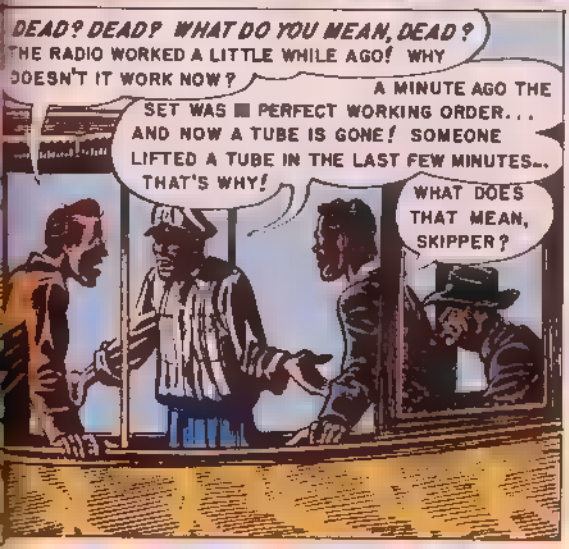

ME... ME? HOW RIDICULOUS! I'M A CIVIL SERVICE WORKER! A BOOKKEEPER! I WAS SENT OUT TO MEPHISTO PRISON TO TRANSCRIBE SOME RECORDS!
THE MOTOR! WHAT'S WRONG!
GLUNK!
CLANK!
CLANG!

SAND! SOMEONE'S SLIPPED SAND INTO THE GAS TANK! THE ENGINE'S CONKED OUT!

SAND IN THE MOTOR! THEN ONE OF YOU IS THE KILLER! CALL THE SHORE, SKIPPER! TELL THEM TO SEND OUT A PLANE... A BOAT...

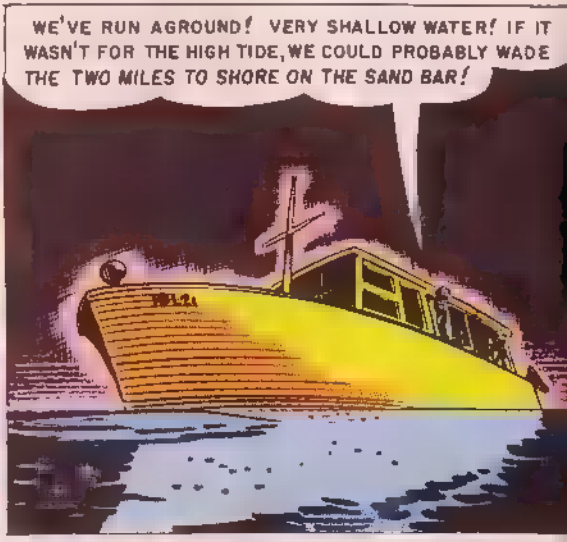
YOU LOUSY RAT! I'VE SEEN YOUR KIND! YOU ACT LIKE A SQUIRREL, BUT YOU'D KNOCK OFF YOUR GRANDMOTHER WITH AN AXE IF YOU HAD TO! I'LL TEACH YOU...
HOLD IT! HOLD IT! LET'S NOT GO BERSERK!

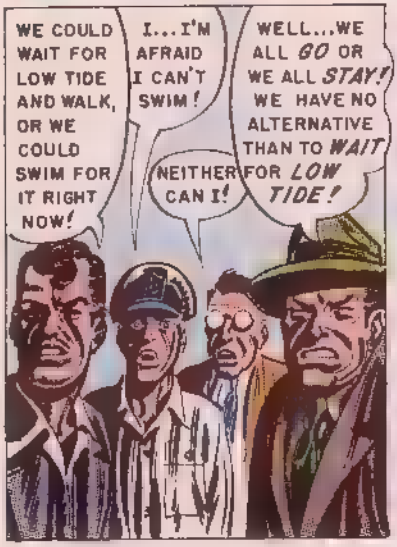
WELL, SKIPPER! HAVE YOU CALLED THE POLICE? WILL WE BE SAVED? WHY AREN'T YOU WORKING THE RADIO?
THE RADIO'S DEAD!

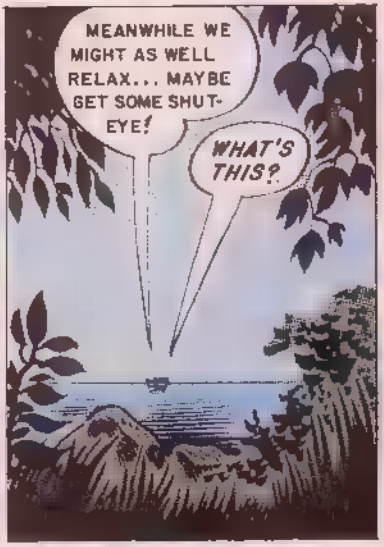

DEAD? DEAD? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, DEAD? THE RADIO WORKED A LITTLE WHILE AGO! WHY DOESN'T IT WORK NOW?
A MINUTE AGO THE SET WAS IN PERFECT WORKING ORDER... AND NOW A TUBE IS GONE! SOMEONE LIFTED A TUBE IN THE LAST FEW MINUTES... THAT'S WHY!
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, SKIPPER?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? IT MEANS WE DRIFT! WE DRIFT TILL SOMEONE SPOTS US OR TILL WE HIT THE SHORE!

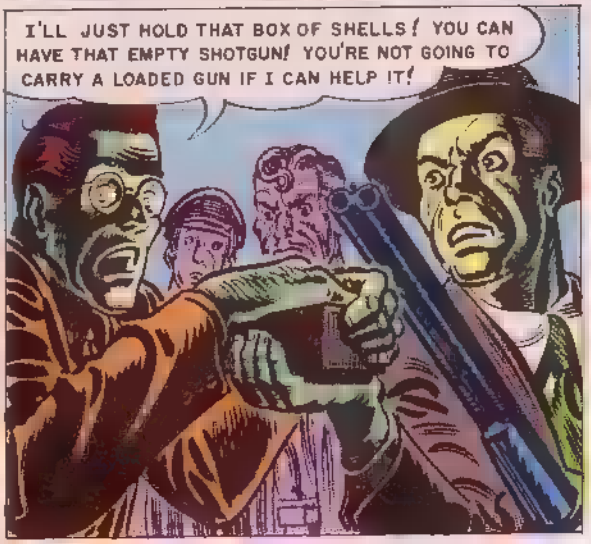
IT'S GETTING DARK! WE'VE BEEN DRIFTING FOR HOURS! STRONG CROSS-CURRENT! WE COULDN'T BE MORE'N TWO MILES FROM SHORE... HEY... WHAT...
SCRRRRRAPE

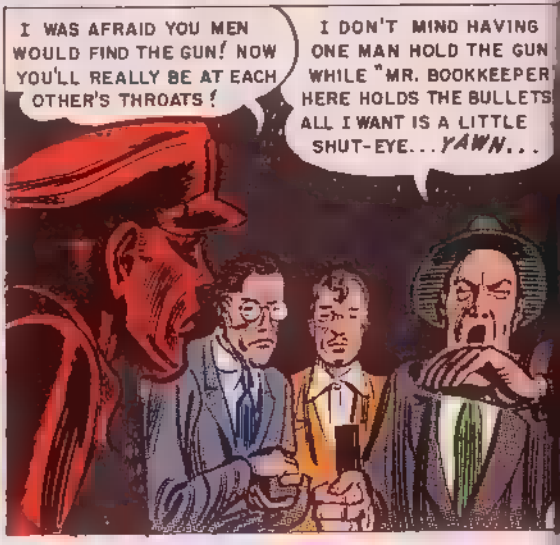

WE'VE RUN AGROUND! VERY SHALLOW WATER! IF IT WASN'T FOR THE HIGH TIDE, WE COULD PROBABLY WADE THE TWO MILES TO SHORE ON THE SAND BAR!

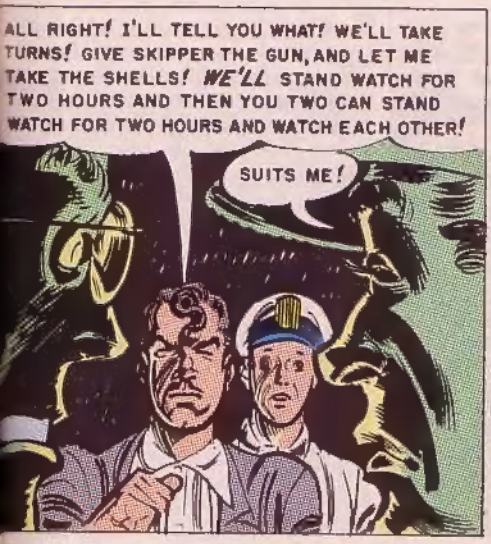

WE COULD WAIT FOR LOW TIDE AND WALK, OR WE COULD SWIM FOR IT RIGHT NOW!
I... I'M AFRAID I CAN'T SWIM!
NEITHER CAN I!
WELL... WE ALL GO OR WE ALL STAY! WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE THAN TO WAIT FOR LOW TIDE!


MEANWHILE WE MIGHT AS WELL RELAX... MAYBE GET SOME SHUT-EYE!
WHAT'S THIS?

A SHOT-GUN, AND SHELLS IN THE STORAGE LOCKER!
OH NO YOU DON'T!


I'LL JUST HOLD THAT BOX OF SHELLS! YOU CAN HAVE THAT EMPTY SHOTGUN! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CARRY A LOADED GUN IF I CAN HELP IT!


I WAS AFRAID YOU MEN WOULD FIND THE GUN! NOW YOU'LL REALLY BE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS!
I DON'T MIND HAVING ONE MAN HOLD THE GUN WHILE "MR. BOOKKEEPER" HERE HOLDS THE BULLETS. ALL I WANT IS A LITTLE SHUT-EYE... YAWN...


ALL RIGHT! I'LL TELL YOU WHAT! WE'LL TAKE TURNS! GIVE SKIPPER THE GUN, AND LET ME TAKE THE SHELLS! WE'LL STAND WATCH FOR TWO HOURS AND THEN YOU TWO CAN STAND WATCH FOR TWO HOURS AND WATCH EACH OTHER!
SUITS ME!

...AND SO NIGHT FALLS! THE MOON REACHES ITS ZENITH AND THEN SLOWLY DROPS TOWARDS THE HORIZON! AND WITH IT, DROPS THE TIDE...

TIDE'S DROPPING!
YEAH!

...JUST ABOUT SHALLOW ENOUGH TO WADE!

THE BOOKKEEPER! THE INNOCENT BOOKKEEPER! HE'S SNEAKING AWAY!

QUICK! QUICK, YOU IDIOTS! THE GUN! THE SHELLS! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S THE KILLER?

DON'T YOU SEE HE'S TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM US? I'LL GIVE HIM BOTH BARRELS RIGHT...BETWEEN... AH...
B-BLAM

I TELL YOU, I CAN SPOT THAT TYPE EVERY TIME! WOULD KILL HIS GRANDMOTHER WITH AN AXE...

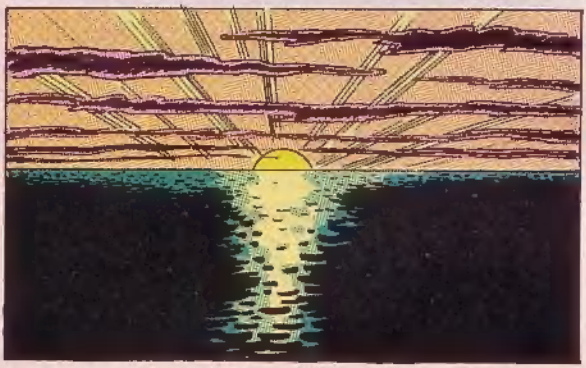
I HAD A FEELING HE WAS THE KILLER! I KINDA FELT IT ALL ALONG!

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU GUYS! DON'T YOU BELIEVE ME? YOU THINK I'M THE MURDERER?

HE REALLY WAS A BOOKKEEPER! HE TRIED TO GET AWAY BECAUSE HE WAS SCARED! BUT YOU HANDLED THAT SHOTGUN PRETTY SMOOTHLY! YOU LOOK MORE LIKE A KILLER THAN HE DID! NOW GIVE ME THAT GUN!

YOU'RE ACTING MIGHTY SUSPICIOUS TOO! SURE YOU CAN HAVE THE GUN, . . AND YOU CAN HAVE THIS TOO!

WOMP!
WOMP!
WOP!



THE SUN SPREADS MAJESTICALLY OVER THE HORIZON OF AN EMPTY SEA... AND THE MOON RISES BEFORE IT, RACING PERPENDICULARLY ACROSS THE SKY... AND BELOW, THE OCEAN STANDS AT... HIGH TIDE...

FOR MADMEN ONLY!

© 1991 E.C. Publications, Inc.

In 1952, the same foul fiends who produced the horror comic you now hold entered the humor field with **MAD**, and the rest is history.

Now, the preliminary painting for the cover of the very first issue of **MAD** is available as a limited edition, high quality lithographic print, signed by the artist, the legendary original editor of **MAD**, **Harvey Kurtzman**!

True to form, Harvey signed the lithos "Kurtz" with a doodle of a "man," but over the course of many signings, some of the doodles were done fancier than others. Some examples of these are shown above.

This collector's item is offered in three editions. For the regular madman, there's our regular edition, with the regular signature, in an edition of 750 numbered prints. For the supreme madman, there's a special edition of 100 numbered prints, each with one of the special signatures. And for the completely insane man, there are a mere five "progressive proof sets," each consisting of 27 different prints which detail how succeeding colors were laid down by the lithographer to achieve the final product, all packed in a handsome collector's box.

To top everything off, every print comes with its own 32-page booklet/certificate of authenticity, written by **MAD** historian Maria Reidelbach and containing biographies of 37 **MAD** creators.

So stop reading this ad already and send us $1.00 for a lovely full-color brochure with complete details on how much you want this print, how outrageously expensive it is, and how you can order!

ANOTHER RAINBOW • Box 2079 • Prescott, AZ 86302